RAJYA SABHA

MONDAY, THE 10thDECEMBER,2001\19AGRAHAYANA, 1923(Saka)

The House met at eleven of the Clock,

MR. CHAIRMAN In the Chair

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Measures adopted for Family Planning

*281. SHRI MAN MOHAN SAMAL:

Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state :

(a) whether Government have assessed the various family planning measures adopted by the third world and other developing countries in the world to control the population explosion;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government have been planning to adopt a China like policy to control population in the country in near future; and

(d) if so, the details thereof ?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. C.P. THAKUR): (a) to (d) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) and (b) Government is aware of the measures adopted by the third world and other developing countries for population stabilization and sustainable development. A number of countries have implemented population programmes with the objective of empowering people to seek and accept services to fulfil their reproductive health goals and to seek other Reproductive Health Services. These have resulted in significant improvement in social development, and in the status of health and women's empowerment. These are reflected in better indicators and achievement with regard to Total Fertility Rate (TFR), Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) and Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) which has eventually resulted in increased life expectancy at birth. The examples of countries which have achieved significant success in the programme are Thailand, Indonesia, Srilanka, Egypt, recently Iran and to some extent in Bangladesh.

(c) and (d) Government of India is signatory to the Plan of Action (POA) of International Conference or Population and Development. The Chinese Population Policy is at variance with the Plan of Action of International Conference on Population and Development. Recently approved National Population Policy of this country affirms Government's commitment towards voluntary and informed choice and consent of citizens while availing Reproductive and Child Health services and to continue the target free approach in administering family planning services. Considering the high unmet need for family planning services in the country, the Government's efforts are aimed at strengthening services, improving their quality and increasing outreach, and coverage through a series of strategies enumerated in the National Population Policy.

SHRI MAN MOHAN SAMAL: Sir, the hon. Minister is aware of the fact that population problem is the biggest problem facing our country. It is undermining our economic growth rate. When countries like Indonesia and Egypt have achieved a significant success in controlling population, why is it that our country has failed to achieve this object?

DR. C. P. THAKUR: Sir, I thank the hon. Member for asking this question. His question is the first in the List of Questions'. I congratulate him for that. Sir, this is a very burning problem facing our country. Today there are twelve questions on Health and Family Planning. That shows that the hon. Members are taking keen interest in the Department of Health and Family Welfare. I thank them for that also. Sir, every country has, according to its needs...

SHRI SANGH PRIYA GAUTAM : Sir, last Friday on this very issue there was a discussion in the form of a Private Member's Bill.

DR. C. P. THAKUR: Yes Sir, the Population Commission, headed by the Prime Minister, was constituted last year. Since then we have started taking very active measures to control population. Since some of the activists in the Rajya Sabha do not like the usage of the word 'control', I would use the word 'stabilisation'. We are going ahead with it and, I think, the population of this country will be stabilised.

SHRI MAN MOHAN SAMAL : Sir, I would like to know whether the Government proposes to take any hard measures in terms of both incentives and disincentives to be given to the people in order to address the population problem for safeguarding the national interest.

DR. C. P. THAKUR : Sir, the question, whether hard measures should be adopted or not, has been repeatedly discussed. It was the consensus of all the important members of the Population Commission that since hard measures were taken once and they were not very successful, we should do it through more of services and a motivational approach. This approach has started paying dividends and the fertility rate has started coming down.

श्री बालकवि बैरागी: धन्यवाद, सभापति महोदय । सभापति महोदय, यह संयॊग की बात है और अभी गौतम जी ने भी बाताया कि शुक्रवार को हम ने जहां चर्चा समाप्त की थी आज वहीं से शुरू हो रही है । उस दिन इस विषय पर काफी लंबी चर्चा हुई थी । सभापति महोदय, मेरे प्रश्न के दो भाग हैं, भाग (अ) यह कि परिवार नियोजन के इन दो शब्दों पर आप के मंत्रालय ने यदि गंभीरता से विचार किया हो तो आप देखेंगे कि परिवार नियोजन और जनसंख्या नियंत्रण यानी पॉपुलेशन कंट्रोल तथा फेमिली प्लानिंग, ये दोनो शब्द अलग – अलग होकर अर्थ भी अलग – अलग रखते हैं । नियोजित परिवार में बच्चे की आवश्यकता हो सकती है कि मुझे मेरे परिवार का नियोजन करना है और मुझे एक या दो बच्चे चाहिएं , लेकिन पॉपुलेशन कंट्रोल में शायद एक बच्चे के बाद हम लोग नियंत्रण शुरू करें । तो क्या आप के विभाग ने इन दोनों टर्म्स पर गंभीरतापूर्वक विचार कर के इन के बीच में संतुलन बैठाने की कॊशिश की है ? प्रश्न का दूसरा भाग यह है कि मैंने आप से उस दिन भी निवेदन किया था कि जब तक जनसंख्या के आधार पर केन्द्र के अनुदान प्रदेश सरकारों को मिलते रहेंगे तब तक प्रदेश सरकारें अपने यहां आबादी को कम करने में क्यों दिलचस्पी लेंगी ? महोदय, जिन सरकारों ने इन कार्यक्रमों में दिलचस्पी लेना शुरू किया उन के अनुदान कम हुए हैं । इस बारे में कई राज्य सरकारों की तरफ से ऎसी सूचनाएं मिलती हैं कि हम ने परिवार नियोजन या जनसंख्या नियंत्रण कर के गलती की है । वे ऎसा भी महसूस करते हैं । इन विसंगतियों के बीच में से हम इस जनसंख्या की नीति को किस तरह से आगे ले जा सकते हैं और हमारी सकारात्मक नीती कौनसी हॊगी, क्या भारत सरकार ने इस पर कोई विचार किया है ? अगर किया है , तो क्या आप उस पर प्रकाश डाल सकेंगे ?

डा.सी.पी. ठाकुर: सभापति जी, एक्च्युअली कंट्रोल और नियोजन वर्ड पर, जो कंट्रोल शब्द है उस पर लोगों को आपत्ति है कि कंट्रोल में कुछ ऎसा लगता है कि इसमें एक फोर्स है, जबरदस्ती है । दुनिया भर ने, अब चीन ने भी इस पर फिर से सोचना शुरू किया है कि जो कंट्रोल वर्ड है उसको न रखकर कुछ By providing services वगैरह किया जाए । वहां भी इस पर रीथिंकिंग शुरू हो गई है । जो अब नई एनएफएचएस की रिपोर्ट आई है, वर्ल्ड पापुलेशन की रिपोर्ट आई है, उससे भी लगता है कि चीन ने ऎसा सॊचना शुरू किया है । दूसरा, जो आप का कहना है, वह बहुत ज्यादा फायदा तो उन लोगों को नहीं दिया गया है और नुकसान भी नहीं है । पापुलेशन का जो मैम्बर आफ पार्लियामेंट का नंबर है वह इस लिए फ्रीज किया गया है चूंकि यह जो स्टॆट हैं वह

जल्दी – जल्दी काम करेंगी, पापुलेशन को स्टेबलाइज करेंगी, वह लोग यह काम करेंगे, इसलिए किया गया है । आठ ई. ए. जी. स्टेट चुनी गई हैं, इमपावर एक्शन ग्रुप स्टेटस, इनमें प्रो-एक्टिव रोल सेंट्रल गवर्नमेंट भी करेगी, उन लोगों को हम इसमें स्टिमुलेट करेंगे, उन लोगों को उत्साहित करेंगे कि यह काम आप कीजिए । इसमें हम लोगों ने काम अभी शुरू किया है । फिलहाल पहला बैच गया है । इसमें जितनी स्टेट हैं, जो पापुलेशन में पीछे पड़ रही हैं उनको जिलों में बांट कर केन्द्र सरकार के आफीसर को कुछ – कुछ जिले दे दिए गए हैं कि आप लोग वहां जाइए, हर दो महीने पर जाइए, उनसे मिलिए और कहिए कि आप काम अपना शुरू कीजिए, इसमें आपके यहां क्या कमी है उसको हम पूरा करेंगे । इसका थोड़ा असर हुआ है, थोड़ा लज्जित भी लोग होते हैं कि काम नहीं हो रहा है और यह लोग बार-बार आ रहे हैं । तो सर, यह सब काम हमने इसमें शुरू किया है ।

श्री संघ प्रिय गौतम: सभापति जी , समय और आवश्यकता के अनुसार कानून तो बनते और बिगड़ते रहते हैं । इस समय आवश्यकता आबादी कॊ रोकने की है , जिसका कुप्रभाव चारों तरफ पड़ रहा है । इससे कोई योजना पूरी नहीं हो पा रही है, कोई विकास का काम शुरू नहीं हो पा रहा है , खाने की कमी , पीने के पानी की कमी , मकानों की कमी , दवा की कमी, रोजगार की कमी हो रही है, तमाम अपराध बढ़ते चले जा रहे हैं और बेकार के लोग जो हैं वह खुराफातों में फंसते चले जा रहे हैं । आपने चीन की दूसरी बात तो कह दी की चीन इस पर दुबारा कंसीडर कर रहा है, लेकिन उनकी जो पहली आवश्यक्ता है कि नियंत्रण करना चाहिए क्या आप उसे करने जा रहे हैं ? आप हर सुविधा का रास्ता अपनाते हैं । संविधान के अनुच्छेद 51 A में नागरिकों के कर्तव्य बताए गए हैं । इनमें कितने कर्तव्यों का पालन हो रहा है ? इसमें एक यह भी है कि We should create a scientific order, लेकिन पाखंण्ड, आडम्बर, ढोंग, अंधविश्वास की तरफ यह देश जा रहा है । मैं आपसे यह प्रार्थना करना चाहता हूं और पूछना चाहता हूं कि आज की आवश्यकता को देखते हुए क्या चीन को जो पहला उपचार है, जो आबादी कॊ नियंत्रण करने की नीति है, उसे आप इस देश में करने जा रहे हैं या नहीं?

डा. सी. पी. ठाकुर: माननीय सभापति जी, माननीय सदस्य की जो चिंता है, उस चिंता के प्रति शुक्रवार को इसी माननीय सदन में सारे सदस्यों ने सहमती प्रकट की थी कि पापुलेशन पर नियंत्रण होना चाहिए, लेकिन केवल मैथड में डिफरेन्स है । इनका कहना है कि जो चीन में जो मैथड है, उसको हमें एक्सेप्ट करना चाहिए, जबरदस्ती करना चाहिए, लेकिन जबरदस्ती का जो एक बार का एक्सपीरिएन्स हुआ है उससे फल बहुत अच्छा नहीं निकला है, लोगों में प्रतिक्रिया हुई थी । अब फिर वह काम करेंगे तो जरूरी नहीं कि प्रतिक्रिया न हो, यह प्रतिक्रिया फिर भी हो सकती है । ... (व्यवधान) ...

श्री संघ प्रिय गौतम: भारत में ?

डा. सी. पी. ठाकुर : जी, भारत में ।

श्री संघ प्रिय गौतम: सर, क्षमा करेंगे, दक्षिण भारत में इंदिरा गांधी जी 150 सीटें जीतकर आईं थी । वहां कोई प्रतिक्रिया नहीं हुई थी, लेकिन जहां पाखंडी लोग थे वहां प्रतिक्रिया हुई थी ।

श्री हंसराज भारद्वाज: पाखंडवाद के खिलाफ की बात आप बोल रहे हैं ।

श्री संघ प्रिय गौतम : भारत में ?

डा. सी. पी. ठाकुर: सर, पाखंडवाद के खिलाफ तो हम भी हैं । दक्षिण भारत में तो हेल्थ सिस्टम ज्यादा इम्प्रूव है, वहां प्राइमरी हैल्थ सेंटर ज्यादा एक्टिव हैं । केरल में मैने जाकर जब पूछा कि अगर डाक्टर प्राइमरी हैल्थ सेंटर पर नहीं गया तो हैल्थ मिनिस्टर का क्या फर्ज होता है ? तो उन्होने कहा कि अगर कोई डाक्टर वहां नहीं गया तो इतने फोन आएंगे की प्लेन लेकर उस जगह हमें जाना पड़ेगा कि आखिर डाक्टर वहां क्यों नहीं पहुंचा, लेकिन यह कमी नार्थ इंडिया की स्टेट्स में हैं । फिर भी हम प्रयत्नशील हैं कि वह लोग काम करें । अभी हर स्टेट में अधिकारी लोगों ने जाना शुरू किया है, मिनिस्टर ने जाना शुरू किया है, हम लोगों ने जाना शुरू किया है, सेक्रेटरी को भेज रहे हैं, जो बड़े-बड़े आफीसर दिल्ली में बैठे रहते थे उन सबने स्टेट्स में जाना शुरू किया है । सर, यह काम प्रगति पर है ।

श्री बालकवि बैरागी: सभापति महोदय, समस्या दूसरी है । लोक सभा के सदस्य अपने क्षेत्रों में आज भी परिवार नियोजन या जनसंख्या नियंत्रण पर स्पष्ट तौर से बात करने में संकोच करते हैं, घबराते हैं और उनको लगता है कि उनका वोट बैंक टूट जाएगा । आज भी वे लोग इस बारे में बात नहीं करते हैं । हम यहां राज्य सभा में विस्तार से बहस कर रहे हैं लेकिन लोक सभा के सदस्य आज भी इस मामले को टालते हैं, कभी इस ओर आपका ध्यान गया है या नहीं ?

डा. सी. पी. ठाकुर: मैं तो यही निवेदन करूंगा कि हमारे लोक सभा और राज्य सभा के जितने सदस्य हैं, वे अगर पापुलेशन को कंट्रोल करने के बारे में 2 शब्द हरेक भाषण में कहें तो देश का बहुत बढ़ा कल्याण होगा ।

SHRIMATISHAB ANA AZMI: Sir, the Government has put up a National Commission on Population. That has met only once since its inception. What measures is the Government taking to make sure that the MPs (Members of Parliament) are sensitised on the paradigm shift that is taking place on issues *of* population ? Moreover, there are certain State Governments that are taking up coercive strategies which are in direct conflict with the National Commission on Population. What does the Government proposes to do to make sure that the States, in spite of their autonomy, at least stay within the paradigm which is

being established for the developing countries as established by the international bodies ? This is the question I would like to put, through you, Sir, to the hon. Minister.

DR. C. P. THAKUR: Sir, regarding her second question, we had written to those States that there was a consensus in the National Commission on Population. One basic principle was adopted. So, all the States in India should conform to that policy. Unless there is a shift, unless everbody decides, unless the leaders of all the political parties decide that we go in for coercive methods, we have to follow that. ...*(Interruptions)*...

SHRIMATI SHABANA AZMI: There are Chief Minister who have very clearly said that persons who have more than two children will not be able to contest elections.

DR. C. P. THAKUR: But we have written to the Chief Ministers. Some of the Chief Ministers are revising their opinion also.

SHRIMATI SHABANA AZMI : But writing letters is not enough. The policy has started. The policy which has started is in direct conflict with me National Commission on Population.

DR. C. P. THAKUR: But we have written to them. They have assured that they will not adopt coercive measures.

SHRIMATI SHABANA AZMI: That is not true. I would like to know what is happening in Madhya Pradesh ...*(Interruptions)*...

PROF. M. SANKARALINGAM : Hon. Chairman, Sir, in para two, in the answer given to parts (c) & (d) of the statement placed before the House, it is stated : "The Chinese Population Policy is at variance with the Plan of Action of International Conference on Population and Development." What are the significant variant factors between the Chinese method of approach and our method of approach ? In nineties, in Lok Sabha, there were 40 seats for members of Parliament from Tamil Nadu. Since Tamil Nadu Government has implemented this policy very effectively, they have now reduced the number of seats to 39. Implementing this policy has adversely affected their representation in Lok Sabha. But fortunately, this Government has passed the Bill to assure the present allocated Lok Sabha seats to continue for another 25 years. Is there anything permanent about it or is such a thing in the mind of the Government to remove the vagaries in the problem ?

DR. C. P THAKUR : Actually, Sir, that seat has been frozen, keeping in mind that the population is increasing in Northern States, and there will be a demand for more seats. They are actually being stabilised in Southern States. Therefore, the seat has been frozen. It will continue for another 25 years. By that time, I think, most of the Northern States will learn a lesson from the South, and they will behave like a South-East.

The variance is, the Chinese adopted coercive measures. Now they have realised that that, after a certain time, is not bearing fruit. They are also changing to the International Cairo Convention approach.

SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO: Sir, in the beginning, the family planning slogan was ″हम दो हमारे दो ". Then toeing the feet of China, we have changed our solgan to "One is fun". Now, China has started advising its people not to have children to overcome the population explosion. Are we going to adopt this slogan now? One of the ways to control the population explosion is contraceptives. My supplementary is related to this. In 1992-93, the budget for contraceptives, i.e. pills, condoms, sterilisation, IUD etc. was Rs. 1,090 crores. This year, it is Rs. 4,200 crores. There is almost a four-fold increase in the Budget allocation. But there is no corresponding increase in the Couple Protection Rate. In 1992, the Couple Protection Rate was 44.2 per cent. It had come down to 43.6 per cent in 1994. It rose to 46 per cent in 1996. But, again, it dipped to 43.8 per cent in 2000. The Couple Protection Rate has not reached even 50 per cent. I would like to know from the hon. Minister the reasons for our not being able to achieve even 50 per cent in the Couple Protection Rate, which is very vital for controlling the population explosion.

DR. C. P. THAKUR: Sir, Actually, I asked my Chinese counterpart whether they have the one-child norm in China. They denied that and said,"No, no. It has been advertised wrongly in the Press, etc.". So, they have not done that.

Regarding the couple protection rate, there is a problem. We have to achieve 50 per cent or 60 per cent or even more than that. We are trying to do that. But there is a problem, especially, in certain States. The couple protection rate is high, especially, in the southern States. In the northern States it is low. Therefore, we have chosen those States for improving the couple protection rate. We have consulted 8 States on that.

SHRI S. B. CHAVAN : Hon. Chairman, Sir, the way in which the hon. Minister has replied to the question clearly shows that there is complacency in

the Ministry's attitude towards family welfare. He seems to be very careful even in using the word "control". I think, at this rate, the population explosion is bound to be there. We may discuss anything. But you cannot stop the kind of population increase that, in fact, is taking place. Ours is a highly populated country. No amount of persuasion can succeed. When you are not serious about it, how can you expect your officers to be serious about this issue ? The Hon. Prime Minister has to make up his mind first. Don't try to pass on the buck from one to the other. All of you are trying to do what you are advised to do. I would like to know whether the Prime Minister is convinced that, in fact, it is a serious problem and we are going to face a terrible situation just within the next five years. Within five years we are going to reach a state where everthing is going to be unavailable to the citizens. Knowing full well the implications of all this, you are just sitting and behaving as if you want to allow things to take shape as they are. I don't think population control is going to be possible at this rate. You have to be serious about it. Make up your mind and tell the people that you are, in fact, very much interested in controlling the population explosion.

DR. C. P. THAKUR: Sir, there is no complacency on the part of the Central Government. Actually, we are serious about the issue of population explosion. So far as the Health Ministry is concerned, the first problem is population stabilisation. That is the first problem which we are facing. The second problem is HIV and AIDS. We are taking all the measures. There were some deficiencies, in the sense that we were not, previously, able to meet some of the needs of the society. Now, we are trying to meet those needs, At least, in the coming years, we will be able to provide condoms, IUDs, etc. We have started recently the Health Melas. You will be glad to know that in Mathura District, a Health Mela was held last year. Even in a whole year, only two family planning operations, tubectomy or vasectomy, were done. But in the Health Mela, without coercion or anything else, 128 operations were done in three days. The same thing we observed in Kargil also. Kargil is a far-flung area. We went there and we organised everthing. One hundred and thirty six operations were done in Kargil, the people were mostly from the minority community. They all opted for operations. The lesson that we have learnt from this is that, possibly, we are not able to provide adequate service to the masses; therefore, they are not adopting this method. We are changing and we are working on those lines.

PROF. (SHRTMATI) BHARATI RAY: Sir, the use of contraceptives is the most effective way of bringing down the birth rate. According to the UN studies conducted in 1998-99, the contraceptive prevalence rate in India should be at

least 65 per cent. But the studies conducted by the NFHS-II show that it is only 48.2 per cent. In the case of Thailand, it is 72 per cent. In the case of China, it is 85 per cent. In the case of Indonesia, it is 57 per cent and in the case of Bangladesh, it is 49 per cent. What is the Government doing for easy accessibility and easy availability of contraceptives ? This is part (a) of my question. Part (b) of my question is this. As I have mentioned many times, the main reason for the failure of family planning programmes is that it addresses the women. In India, women have no control over their bodies. Women do not take the family planning decisions. Therefore, men should be the chief targets of the family planning programmes. These days we use the word "reproductive interests". It means reproductive security, reproductive health, reproductive equality and reproductive decision-making. The maternal mortality rate is very high. In some cases it is preventable. What are the steps being taken by the Government to bring down the maternal mortality rate and the infant mortality rate : What is the Government doing to focus on men to ensure that the family planning programmes are successful in India ?

DR. C. P. THAKUR: Sir, so far as contraceptives are concerned, Indonesia is using long-acting injectables as contraceptives. When we introduced it in India, there were many protests from most of the women orgainsations that it should not be introduced. Sir, we have introduced a lot of contraceptives.

PROF. (SHRTMATI) BHARATI RAY : There were no protests against the use of condoms.

DR. C. P. THAKUR : We are giving them choices. We have introduced these long-acting contraceptives and some other contraceptives. The choice is left to the users. Sir, both the male service-providers and the female service-providers, go to the rural areas. We have seen that if a male service-provider convinces a male that he should use condoms and other contraceptives, in that case, the results are better. There is no doubt about it. Sir, I agree with the hon. Member that these programmes should be focused more on men.

SHRI K.M. SAIFULLAH : I would like to know from the hon. Minister whether the Government proposes to give any incentives or jobs or reservations in jobs to the youths and others, especially to the Muslim community to ensure the success of the family planning programmes. There is an allegation that the Muslims are not adopting family planning methods. Is there any proposal before the Government to give some incentives to the minorities or make some provision for reservation to encourage them to adopt family planning methods ?

DR. C. P. THAKUR: Sir, there is no such provision. Last year, we organised a meeting of religious leaders. These things were discussed in that meeting. This year we are going to have another meeting in the Akal Takht. Sir, a lot of suggestions were made. So we are approaching the Muslim community in this way.

SHRI K.M. SAIFULLAH : If you ask the religious leaders, they will have different versions. The Government must come out with some incentives. The young people will come and undergo operations for the sake of jobs. In this way you can help the minorities and bring down the population rate.

MISS MABEL REBELLO: Sir, here we are talking about other countries. But in our own country, the family planning programme has been successful at least in Tamil Nadu. One of the reasons was the Mid-Day-Meal Scheme. The hon. Leader of the Opposition, when he was the Finance Minister, introduced the Mid-Day-Meal-Scheme all over the country. Some other States also took it up. But because of financial constraints they have discontinued it. Last week, the Supreme Court directed the States to start the Mid-Day-Meal Scheme. Hot mid-day meal needs to be given to the primary school children. Since States have this problem and the Scheme has been successful, it has been one of the reasons for the success of the family planning programme. Will the hon. Finance Minister give the States some financial assistance for making this Mid-Day-Meal Scheme a success so that children come to school, they have nutritious meal, their health is looked after and the parents have the confidence that their children will live, and if they live, then the parents will not go in for large families. Will you do something about it, Sir ?

DR. C. P. THAKUR : There is one thing. Sir. When Periyar Ramaswamy Naicker was the leader of Tamil Nadu and when he used to go to attend marriage functions in those days he used to ask the parents to produce only two children. The same approach was adopted by Mr. Karunanidhi, and even by Jayalalitha. So. it was a combined approach of the leaders which had influenced the society and, therefore, it was a very successful programme. I will request the leaders who are sitting in the House that if they are attending any marriage, they should also advise like that.

DR. M. N. DAS : May I know from the hon. Minister of Health and Family Welfare whether he has come across a recent report of the Commissioner of Census that by 2050 A.D., India's population will be the largest on earth ! By that year the figure will be 150 crores, and the Chinese population figure will be about

147 crores. So, we are competing with China in multiplication of population and We are going to win the race within the next fifty years! But. are we competing in the area of prosperity of the nation also? Perhaps, in that area, we will go down. Anyway, if we cannot bring any legislative measure which is coercive to control the population explosion, are we going to advise the people of India to adopt Chinese food habits ? Will the hon. Minister of Health suggest that we should eat any creature, from monkeys and snakes to white ants and lizards ? In India, Sir, rats eat away one-third of the foodgrains. But in China, rats are a delicacy. The finest pickles are made of rats. We would not change our food habits; we will remain vegetarian and we will multiply our population. But who will remove the poverty in the country? Who will control the diseases in the country? Who will remove illiteracy, unemployment and so on? Unless the Government is strong enough to bring by legislation something to control the population explosion, India's future is bleak.

DR. C.P. THAKUR: Sir, actually, India will not be ruined, I am sure, because in spite of the fact that the population has increased, India is one country in which we are now able to provide food to everybody. There will not be any dearth of food here. Secondly, about stabilisation, the trend that we observe in most of the States now, except three or four States, is that if these four or five States start working very actively, I think the population of India will stabilise. I am sure of this.

*282. *[The questioner (Shri Khan Ghufran Zahidi) was absent. For answer vide page ..... infra.]*

MR. CHAIRMAN : Question No. 283.

Reconstitution of NCM

*283 SHRI NANA DESHMUKH: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have been approached to reconstitute the National Commission for Minorities (NCM);

(b) if so, the details of the demands; and

(c) Government's reaction thereto?

THE MINISTER OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (DR. SATYA NARAYAN JATIYA) : (a) to (c) As per provision of the National